

Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan



A Vision of Conservation

The forest, shoreline, and wetland habitats of Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge support a rich diversity of wildlife, from the regal peregrine falcon to the boisterous black oystercatcher to the unassuming rough-skinned newt. Fed by a generous offering of ancient glacial sediment from nearby bluffs and anchored by gnarled logs of driftwood, the pristine barrier beach of Dungeness Spit curves seamlessly down from the lush layers of old-growth forest above into the sparkling waters of the Salish Sea. Offshore, sheltered beds of rippling eelgrass provide a wealth of nutrients to a teeming nursery of young salmon and crab. Like the brant and dunlin that rely on this home, people flock to Dungeness seeking a welcome haven for the study of dynamic natural forces, distinctive geologic features, and compelling cultural stories. Visitors are inspired as they meander through the primeval forests and emerge upon the stunning seascape vistas. In accord with our friends and partners, and with sound science as our foremost principle, we will continue to monitor and preserve the integrity of this wonder of the Olympic Peninsula ecosystem. We endeavor to understand more about the delicate balance of nature while fostering in our visitors an abiding sense of stewardship for this irreplaceable sanctuary.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long-term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's best estimates of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations, and as such, are primarily used for strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



Dungeness Spit looking west
©Mary Marsh

Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

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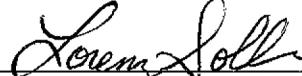
October 2013

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge
Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Approval Submission**

In accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose of this CCP is to specify a management direction for the Refuge for the next 15 years. The goals, objectives, and strategies for improving Refuge conditions – including the types of habitat we will provide, partnership opportunities, and management actions needed to achieve desired future conditions – are described in the CCP. The Service's preferred alternative for managing the Refuge is described in this CCP and the environmental consequences of implementing the CCP were described in the Draft CCP and Environmental Assessment.

This CCP is submitted for the Regional Director's approval by:

Acting Project Leader



04/19/2013

Date

Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex

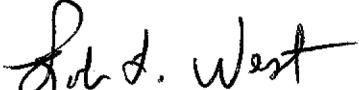
Concur:


Bob Flores
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4/23/13

Date

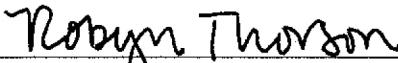
Concur:


Robin West
Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System

4-23-13

Date

Approved:


Robyn Thomson
Regional Director, Region 1
Portland, Oregon

APR 25 2013

Date

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**Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Clallam County, Washington**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) completed a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The CCP will guide management of the Refuge for 15 years. The CCP/EA describes our proposals for managing the Refuge and their effects on the human environment under three alternatives, including a no action alternative.

Decision

Based on our comprehensive review and analysis in the CCP/EA, we selected Alternative B for implementation because it will guide management of the Refuge in a manner that:

- Achieves the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the purposes, vision, and goals of the Refuge.
- Maintains and restores the ecological integrity of the Refuge's habitats and populations.
- Addresses the important issues identified during the CCP scoping process.
- Addresses the legal mandates of the Service and the Refuge.
- Is consistent with the scientific principles of sound wildlife management and endangered species recovery.
- Facilitates priority public uses appropriate and compatible with the Refuge's purposes and the Refuge System mission.

Summary of the Actions to be Implemented

Implementing the selected alternative will have no significant impacts on the environmental resources identified in the CCP/EA. Refuge management under the selected alternative will protect, maintain, and enhance habitat for priority species and resources of concern, and improve the public's opportunities to enjoy wildlife-dependent recreation.

Management of the Refuge under Alternative B will emphasize protecting and maintaining forested, nearshore, freshwater wetland, and stream-riparian habitats, with an increased level of active habitat management, monitoring, and enhancement. A forest assessment will be conducted within the Dawley Unit and a step-down forest management plan will be completed by 2018. Active forest management techniques will be employed within a core 40-acre area to promote development of mature old-growth forest characteristics. A road inventory and condition assessment for the Dawley Unit will be completed by 2016. The amount of roads maintained will decrease, unneeded logging spur roads outside of the core area will be rehabilitated, and the slope along the main road will be stabilized. A wetland inventory and hydrological assessment will be conducted by 2015. The impoundment at the Dawley Unit will be managed for optimum water levels and benthic layer characteristics for amphibians and other benefiting species.

Public use activities on the Refuge will include saltwater fishing, shell-fishing (clams and crabs), wildlife observation, wildlife photography, hiking, no-wake boating, jogging, horseback riding (should alternative access be obtained per compatibility determination), beach use (wading, beachcombing, other recreational beach uses), environmental education, and environmental

interpretation. Areas that are open or closed to public use year-round, and areas that are open seasonally depending on the needs of Refuge wildlife, will remain the same with some exceptions. Changes will include new limits on boat landing hours and jogging stipulations. Jogging will be allowed on the trail adjacent to the Refuge's parking lots and along the west beach from the end of the upland forested trail to the Refuge's western boundary. Horseback riding will be allowed with stipulations, on the beach west of where the main trail meets Dungeness Spit if a safe and legal alternate access route from the west or east can be obtained. If an alternate access route is obtained from the east, horseback use of a Refuge-owned road to the beach will also be allowed.

Additional wildlife viewing, interpretive, and environmental education programs will be offered. Staff and volunteer time devoted to making visitor contacts and community outreach will increase. New orientation materials, regulatory signage, and volunteer opportunities will be developed.

The effects of climate change will be considered during management activities, and we will reduce the Refuge's carbon footprint. Invasive species will be monitored and controlled. Other management activities will continue, including fire management, maintenance of existing structures, coordination with State, Tribal, and other partners; cultural resources protection, and land protection within the approved Refuge boundary. All proposed actions are subject to funding availability.

Public Involvement and Changes Made to Alternative B Based on Comments

We incorporated a variety of public involvement techniques in developing and reviewing the CCP/EA. This included open houses, several planning updates, numerous meetings with partners and elected officials, and public review and comment on the Draft CCP/EA. The details of our public involvement program are described in the CCP in Appendix K. Based on the public comments we received and considered, Alternative B as described in the CCP/EA has been modified as follows.

- Additional references to coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard regarding the New Dungeness Light Station are included.
- Jogging and horseback riding have been determined to be appropriate and compatible with stipulations. Appropriate use findings have been modified and new compatibility determinations have been added.
- The strategies and rationale to promote opportunities for wildlife observation and photography, jogging, and horseback riding have been modified under Objective 6.5.
- Some maps were updated to reflect the revised public use areas and above-referenced clarifications.
- Some text changes were made to improve readability and accuracy.

Conclusions

Based on review and evaluation of the information contained in the supporting references, I have determined that implementing Alternative B as the CCP for Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, we are not required to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Robyn Thomson
Regional Director

APR 25 2013

Date

Supporting References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2012. Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1, Portland, OR. 520 pp.

Note: This Finding of No Significant Impact and supporting references are available for public review at the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 715 Holgerson Road, Sequim, Washington, 98382 and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Planning, Visitor Services, and Transportation, 911 NE 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon, 97232. These documents can also be found on our Web site: www.fws.gov/pacific/planning/main/docs/wa/docsdungeness.htm. Interested and affected parties are being notified of our decision.